



**Committee on
Homeland Security Democrats
Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member**

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**Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Decries Vote against
Creating an Independent Commission to Investigate Hurricane Katrina**

WASHINGTON—Today, Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, condemned today's vote blocking the creation of an independent commission to investigate the federal government's poor response to Hurricane Katrina.

Instead of an independent commission, the House of Representatives today voted to convene a Republican-dominated Select Committee to review the government's efforts to respond to the disaster that leveled large parts of the Gulf Coast and displaced tens of thousands of residents.

The Speaker of the House will have the sole authority to name members to the 20-member Select Committee. In addition, only members of the Republican Majority would have the power to issue subpoenas.

"The events of the last two weeks have shown us that we need an independent assessment of what happened," Rep. Thompson said. "Where did the federal government go wrong? What could the state and locals have done better? What happened to citizen preparedness?"

House Leadership also refused to allow an amendment to create an independent commission that was introduced by Rep. Alcee Hastings to be voted upon. Rep. Thompson co-sponsored the Hastings amendment that would have created an independent commission modeled after the 9/11 Commission that investigated the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

"The complexity of this issue creates a need for an independent assessment of what happened," Rep. Thompson added. "Having Congress alone 'investigate' the government's failures on hurricane Katrina is like giving a fox the keys to the henhouse. For the good of the nation, let's put aside partisan politics and not create a straw-man committee."

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